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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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-* Apple Upgrades Mini, iBook! *-
-* Book Relives Commodore & Atari War! *-
-* Hackers Find New Ways To Infect End Users! *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

The week started off with a few really hot and humid days - the worst this summer, but by the end of the week, it's been terrific weather. I can't believe that we're already at the end of July. Where did this year go? Every year just seems to fly by more rapidly than the last. If there were only a way to slow time down a little bit.

During the past couple of weeks, I've received a few e-mails regarding an article that appeared in the past two issues of A-ONE. Don't get scared, these were not negative articles or comments. Essentially, the letters were feedback about the articles. The articles pertained to the recent flap over the hidden sexual content - allegedly hacked - within a video game, the latest edition of Grand Theft Auto. My personal feeling is: What is all of the fuss about? Okay, so there's some gratuitous sex in the game. Like this is the only game out there with sexual innuendo? Have people seen what's in other games, such as the Tomb Raider or, my favorites, Leisure Suit Larry? Do these same people watch television? Soap operas, "reality" shows, and many other genres? These are games. Like you don't know what you are getting when you buy such titles. GTA already has a reputation as having too much gratuitous violence. So people are surprised when they find sexual content? And if it was hacked into the game, you're going to blame the publisher? There are more important things out there to be concerned about rather than blaming society's ills because of video games. I could go on, but this is a subject that I've talked about in the past. I just had to mention it again after seeing all of the attention that the subject has been getting again this past month. I'll get off of my soapbox now.

Until next time...

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New Book About the Battle Between Commodore and Atari

Find out more about the battle between Atari and Commodore in a new book, "The Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore". Learn how former Atari 2600/Atari 800 engineer Jay Miner developed the Amiga computer, and how Atari almost purchased Amiga. Find out how the Atari ST was partially designed by Commodore engineers while they were still at Commodore. Atari founder Nolan Bushnell even joined with Commodore to launch the Commodore CDTV, a precursor to the modern DVD player.

The Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore is a detailed history of the company behind the best selling computer system of all time, the Commodore 64. This book was almost two years in the making, using over 44 hours of interviews with Commodore engineers and managers.

Title: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore: The Inside Story
Pages: 624
Size: 6 x 9 inches
ISBN 0-9738649-0-7
August 2005

To read more about The Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore, please visit:

www.commodorebook.com

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I'll tell you right off that there really isn't a lot of info on the UseNet this week, but we're gonna give it a whirl.

Summer has finally slapped us around here in the northeast... not as bad as some places out west, but enough to let us know that we are still insignificant beings who, if we are indeed changing the climate, are only hurting ourselves despite all the power that we think we have.

Personally, I believe that we've made major modifications to the global climate during the past century or so, but even if I (and the majority of climatologists and environmental scientists) am wrong and the climate changes we see (or think we see) are a product of a cycle or naturally occurring variation, I think it'd be smarter to intervene on the side of keeping things as close to what they are now, as opposed to letting Mother Nature turn the "breadbasket" of the country into a desert and have to get our summer vegetables from Saskatoon Saskatchewan!... But that's just me. <grin>

But never let it be said that I take sides! I've always had a problem with those "tree huggers" too. Them with their bumper stickers that said, "Save the Planet". That's just the height of arrogance. As a matter of fact, it's even worse than denying that we're affecting the climate in the first place. No matter what we do, no matter how much of any of the greenhouse gasses we pump into the air, old Mother Earth isn't going anywhere. She will continue and thrive. She'll wait and bide her time... she has plenty of it... and when we short-sighted, short-lived beings have disappeared, she'll begin the whole process again. She's got plenty of time to get it right.

Well, I truly have no idea why these thoughts came out tonight. They just came out of nowhere. I can tell you one thing though: I had fun playing around with Google's Map utility (<http://maps.google.com>). I just clicked on one of the center provinces in Canada and enlarged the map until I could see the name of a city or town. That's how I came up with Saskatoon, in case you were wondering.

Well, let's get on with the news, hints, tips and info available from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Greg Goodwin asks about SCSI and the CT60:

"If you are the owner of a CT60, would you kindly post about any SCSI based issues you are having? I'm having a devil of a time with my CDR, and I'm attempting to decide if I should keep spending my evenings trying to figure it out, or just buy an IDE CDRW and the appropriate adapter."

Mark Duckworth tells Greg:

"With CT60 and 25MHz bus, the scsi gets errors for me on writes. So I only read from scsi devices."

Kiselo Zelje adds:

"I have 7 scsi devices connected to it and working flawlessly...slow, though... 1.5 to 2 meg throughput... should do for 4x cd r."

Greg tells Kiselo:

"7 SCSI?!? You are a high priest of SCSI voodoo! (I thought I was impressive for 5 on my stock Falcon!)"

Seriously, what I've been running into is the following:

Given HD 8.13 and the following chain: CT60ed Falcon -- 340MB Lacie HD -- Panasonic CDR -- external terminator, I had no problem with the SCSI bus under the stock motherboard (no solders). After the board came back from Rodolphe with solders (and now 25MHz), the HD appears to work correctly, but the CDR has the following odd behavior:

- 1) refuses to read a CD that it read perfectly two minutes earlier
"Drive P: is not responding..."
- 2) pretends to burn a CD (CDISO gives no errors and reports a ready-to-use CD), but the result has directory errors (that is, the CD is the correct number of bytes, but folders and files are missing from the directory).
- 3) adds bursts of static while playing CDs on Aniplayer

I spent much of yesterday copying 8MB ZIP files from place to place

attempting to find a pattern and ... had no errors whatsoever!?! The only thing I can think of that is different is that I rarely have the external HD turned on. On my stock Falcon I've long had the habit of just turning on the device I intended to use, but perhaps the CT60 Falcon is more sensitive?

I'll find out over the next few days if my CT60 Falcon has suddenly become more cooperative."

Rodolphe Czuba tells Greg:

"I think the CD driver you use is the problem ...it runs too fast with an 060 !!

Did you try to remove the FAST RAM flag to allow it to load into ST-RAM instead of SDRAM ?? It will slow it..and maybe software timings will come back to good values...

What is the CD driver you use ???

If it is the extendos, you should report to the author !! He is a CT60 developer... !"

Jean-Marc Maucotel asks about burning CDs on his Falcon:

"What kind of software can i use for burning CDs with a Yamaha CDRW?
French or english would be great."

Ronald Hall tells Jean-Marc:

"A good place to start is here:

<http://www.anodynesoftware.com/>

ExtenDos Gold and CD Writer Suite.

I use the writer software with my Mega ST and a CDRW.

I've not had a chance to test it on my CT60 equipped Falcon yet, but it works stock there just fine as well."

Well folks, that's it for this week. See? I told you it was going to be a short one. Be ready next week for more STuff and, until then, keep your ears open so you'll hear what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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The game was released in October with an "M" rating. After a storm of negative publicity about the hidden scenes, the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, an industry group responsible for rating games, changed the

rating to "AO" for adults only.

Laurence D. Paskowitz, the lawyer who filed the lawsuit on behalf of Cohen, said no parent would knowingly buy an adult-only video game for their children.

"They should really make sure this doesn't happen again," he said. "The least this company can do is offer refunds."

Hidden areas in video games that can be unlocked with special codes or modifications are not uncommon.

Take Two Interactive initially said the scenes were not part of the retail version of the game but later admitted they were.

A message left for a company spokesman was not immediately returned. On Tuesday, Take-Two announced that it had been notified by the Federal Trade Commission's Division of Advertising Practices that it was conducting an inquiry into the game's advertising claims.

The company said it planned to cooperate fully with the probe.

"Rockstar Games and Take Two Interactive regret that consumers may have been exposed to content that was not intended to be accessible in the playable version of 'Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas'," it said in a statement.

The company said it had halted production of the game in the controversial form and was working on a version of the game without the hidden sexual content.

"Going forward, the company will refine the process by which it edits games and will enhance the protection of its game code to prevent such future modifications," it said.

Earlier this week, the House voted 355-21 for a resolution asking the FTC to investigate the company. Last week, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., asked the FTC to investigate Rockstar, saying the company had "gamed the ratings system" by concealing sex scenes in the game that can be unlocked by computer programs available on the Internet.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Target Corp., Best Buy Co. and Circuit City Stores Inc. have pulled the game - last year's top-seller among console games - from their shelves following the rating change.

Australia Outlaws 'Grand Theft Auto'

Australian officials effectively banned the computer game "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" and ordered it removed from stores Friday because it contains hidden sex scenes that can be viewed with a special Internet download.

The Office of Film and Literature Classification said in a statement it had outlawed sales of the game by stripping it of its official classification after learning of the explicit content.

"Revocation of a classification means the computer game cannot be legally

sold, hired, advertised or exhibited in Australia from the date the decision is made," the statement said.

"Businesses that sell or hire computer games should remove existing stocks of this game from their shelves immediately," said Des Clark, director of the government-funded classification board.

The game involves a main character seeking bloody vengeance on gang-filled streets, firing automatic weapons and picking up women along the way.

After downloading and installing a modification to the game - one of many "mods" available on Web sites maintained by video game enthusiasts - a new world opens up in which the girlfriends appear nude and engage in explicit sex acts, according to the modification's author.

The classification board in October 2004 gave the game a MA15+ rating, meaning it could be sold only to people aged over age 15, and warned that it contained "medium level animated violence, medium level coarse language."

On Friday, Clark advised parents to be on the alert for their children accessing the explicit scenes.

"Parents are strongly advised to exercise caution in allowing children continued access to the game," he said - particularly if they have access to the Internet modification.

'Sims' In Nudity Flap

Fresh from the fallout over some sex scenes hidden in a violent video game, an anti-game crusader is pressuring Electronic Arts to take action against those who modify another game, "The Sims 2," so that it can display naked characters.

Last week, a culture war erupted over "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas," a violent game that hackers modified to play graphic sexual scenes. The game industry's ratings board, the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, canceled the "mature" 17-and-up rating on the game and restricted it to "adults only."

The game publisher, Take-Two Interactive Software in New York, is under investigation by the Federal Trade Commission over the incident. The company had said the sex scenes were hidden on its disks, but hackers found them and exposed the scenes by creating programs, or "mods," that could display the scenes. In making its ruling, the game-rating board suggested that publishers should take action against third-party modders who alter game content.

On the heels of that ruling, Jack Thompson, a Florida attorney who has tangled often with the makers of video games, has written a letter to EA and a number of politicians alleging that teen-rated "The Sims 2" game should be the next on the list to be re-rated as an "adults only" game. That's because the game can be "modded" to show naked characters. Normally, the game blurs, or pixelates, the images of characters when they change their clothes, take showers or go to the bathroom in the simulation of ordinary life.

"This is nonsense," said Jeff Brown, spokesman for EA. "Reasonable people understand there is nothing improper in the game."

He added, "Reasonable people recognize what mods are. A consumer who chooses to use a mod does so without any kind of agreement with the company. There is no nudity. There is nothing improper or vulgar in 'The Sims 2.' "

Thompson alleges that the mod for making the characters fully naked is available for downloading over the Internet and that EA is doing nothing to curtail the availability of the mod.

"EA makes it easy, through mods, to add the body parts," he said. "And EA is not taking action against people for messing with its software. They need to get their game back."

Brown said that EA normally encourages fans to create their own mods to make the games more fun. He says the blurring of the game characters is a "comedic device" and that the unmodified animations of the game characters themselves are not anatomically correct and that they resemble store mannequins in that respect.

"Reasonable people understand the San Jose Mercury News is not responsible for vulgar things that people doodle into the margins of the paper," Brown said.

In a conference call with analysts Tuesday, EA CEO Larry Probst said the game-ratings system is working fine despite the recent brouhaha.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Bill Would Tax Internet Pornography

A Democratic lawmaker is planning to propose a new 25 percent federal tax on Internet pornography and new requirements for adult Web sites to help prevent children from looking at them.

The bill, expected to be introduced next week by Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., would impose the excise tax on transactions with for-profit adult Web sites, which typically sell monthly subscriptions to Internet users to look at pornographic photographs or videos.

Money collected from the tax would be used for law enforcement and for protecting children from Internet-related crimes.

Lincoln's spokesman, Drew Goesl, declined Friday to discuss the provisions. "We prefer to wait until the bill is introduced to discuss it," Goesl said.

A draft of the legislation circulated this week among pornography and

free-speech groups. Companion legislation was also expected to be introduced in the House.

Called the Internet Safety and Child Protection Act of 2005, the bill also proposes new rules for Web sites to verify they do business only with adults. It would compel sites to use specialized software to verify a customer's age, subject to enforcement by the Federal Trade Commission.

An FTC spokeswoman said the commission was not aware of the proposed bills.

Apple Upgrades Mini, iBook

Apple Computer has rolled out upgrades to its popular notebook computer line, the iBook, and its compact desktop machine, the Mini.

The iBook now sports more memory and an Airport card as part of the baseline configuration. The Mini now ships with additional memory as well, and a new midrange model comes with the Airport wireless card and Bluetooth capabilities as standard features.

The changes bring the two products more in line with competitors in the PC world, said Yankee Group's Nitin Gupta. "This is a natural progression," he said. "There is nothing out of line with the rest of the industry here."

In fact, consumers now expect their notebook computers - of any stripe - to ship with wireless networking cards as part of the baseline price, said Gupta. "It would be hard to find a laptop computer, especially in that price range, without wireless capabilities," he said.

All iBooks now have Airport Extreme cards that operate using the 802.11g Wi-Fi standard. The entire product line now also has Bluetooth 2.0 capabilities built in. Prices for iBook models start at US\$999. The model with a faster G4 processor chip and a 14-inch screen costs \$1,299.

The upgrade to 512 MB of operating memory has become industry standard on both laptop and desktop computers, said Gupta. Many of the Mac models already shipped with that amount of memory, but the company's low-end computers did not. Now, all iBooks ship with 512 MB of RAM, as do all Minis.

Apple has expanded the Mini line to include a midrange version that ships with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities at \$599. A high-end model includes a SuperDrive for burning CDs and DVDs. That model costs \$699. The Mini line - which requires separate purchase of a monitor and keyboard - starts at under \$500.

Hackers Skip Windows to Embed New Infections

The online security climate continues to deteriorate, as computer hackers are targeting an increasing number of popular programs such as the iTunes music service and software that makes backup copies of data, according to an Internet safety study released yesterday.

Flaws in software that can be exploited by hackers are on the rise, said

the report by the SANS Institute of Bethesda, a cyber-security research and education center.

The report, issued quarterly, is unwelcome news for consumers and businesses hoping for relief as software makers such as Microsoft Corp. work to improve the security of the operating systems that power individual machines and computer networks.

Hackers now often bypass operating systems, staying one step ahead in the ongoing cat-and-mouse warfare between those trying to protect computer systems and those trying to infiltrate or damage them.

For example, worms, viruses and spyware can now infect machines when users simply visit certain Web sites, rather than requiring victims to click on a malicious e-mail or file. Individual songs delivered via trusted programs such as the RealNetworks media player or iTunes can be vehicles for malicious code that can cripple machines or open them up to remote control by hackers.

Once able to penetrate a machine, hackers can steal personal data or use it as a "zombie" to launch attacks on other machines.

Even programs designed in part as a safer alternative to Microsoft, such as the increasingly popular Web browser Firefox, are being hacked, the report said.

"The rate of growth of vulnerabilities is actually increasing... and that's enabling more identity theft," said Alan Paller, director of research at SANS.

Overall, SANS reported 422 new flaws discovered in the second quarter of this year, a 10.8 percent increase over the first quarter and a nearly 20 percent rise from the second quarter of last year.

Vendors of the software have issued "patches," or fixes, for all of the flaws, but they often are not installed rapidly enough by businesses and consumers, the report said.

Of particular worry to the researchers are weaknesses in software for backing up data, an essential for most businesses and many consumers. The study reported flaws in software made by Computer Associates International Inc. and Symantec Corp., which together account for about 30 percent of the market.

The primary vehicle for attack remains Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser, the study said.

Amy Roberts, head of product management in Microsoft's security division, said the company continues to work to stay ahead of the hackers.

She said a more secure version of Internet Explorer will be part of Microsoft's new operating system, Windows Vista, that is scheduled to be released for testing next month.

Geeks Meet at 'What the Hack' Conference

There are hundreds of tents on the hot and soggy campground, but this isn't

your ordinary summertime outing, considering that it includes workshops with such titles as "Politics of Psychedelic Research" or "Fun and Mayhem with RFID."

This is the three-day "What The Hack" convention, a self-styled computer-security conference dealing such issues as digital passports, biometrics and cryptography.

Borrowing heavily from Woodstock and the more professionalized Def Con conference that begins Friday in Las Vegas, the event held every four years in the Netherlands draws an international array of experts and geeks. About 3,000 gathered Thursday for the opening.

Unlike better-known and better-funded industry meetings, "What the Hack" had to fight for its right to exist. The mayor of the southern Dutch town of Boxtel, who oversees the village of Liempde where the convention is held, initially tried to stop the event from pitching its hundreds of tents outside his town - a reluctance stemming from the lingering public image of hackers as asocial, anarchistic and vaguely menacing.

The mayor withdrew his objections after meetings with organizers.

Some of the scheduled lectures and workshops might reinforce the convention's shady reputation, such as the talk about mayhem with RFID, which stands for radio frequency identification tags.

But other seminars appeared wholesome enough, such as the workshop on how to make homes more energy efficient or how activists can lobby governments more effectively.

Even the local police officers assigned to monitor "What the Hack" are being included in the event. Officers are holding daily workshops to educate the public about how they go about securing events like these. Such cooperation with authorities would have raised eyebrows in previous years.

Befitting the age of terrorism, the conference is taking up such security issues as biometrics and new passport technology.

But in line with its anarchic reputation, organizers have made a parody of their own security arrangements, asking attendees to screen their own belongings at an unmanned baggage scanner. Rubber gloves for a "do-it-yourself body cavity search" are provided free of charge.

Overall, the atmosphere resembles that of a music festival, with orderly people waiting in line to buy Jolt colas and vegetarian meals. Children and hammocks are as prevalent as ponytails and laptops, and a curiously popular hangout is the Slacker Salon, a computer-free zone where frenetic Web surfing is taboo.

The relaxed setting is a conscious choice, according to Internet entrepreneur Rop Gonggrijp, who in 1989 helped organize the seminal Galactic Hacker Party, an open-air convention that formed the template for What The Hack.

"The idea was to break the stereotype" of hackers as sun-averse malcontents bent on vandalism, he said. "They've never been part of this community. And now there's fortunately space in the media for more than one kind of hacker."

Rutgers University anthropologist Biella Coleman said events like these

serve a critical function for the many communities of people who are acquainted online, but rarely get the chance to meet in the real world.

"Virtuality needs sociality," she said.

Klaartje Bruyn, for example, is a sign-maker by day, but came to What the Hack for social, rather than professional reasons. Electronically arranging meetings with friends both real and virtual from the comfort of her hammock, she lauded how the festival could bring together so many far-flung yet like-minded people.

"It's like a blind date with 3,000 people," she said.

Professors Make Password Protection Product

The increase in identity theft has prompted two Stanford University professors to develop software that protects computer passwords from Internet thieves.

John Mitchell and Dan Boneh will unveil Pwdhash, software that scrambles passwords typed into Web sites, then creates a unique sign-on for each site visited, at the Usenix Security Symposium in Baltimore next week.

It's the latest attempt to thwart attempts by cyber-criminals who steal passwords by creating phony online banking or e-commerce sites. Cyber criminals dupe victims into believing the site is legitimate and lure them into typing their passwords. The crooks then use the password to loot the victim's bank account. For e-commerce shoppers, many of whom have stored credit card information at their favorite online stores, the thieves may use their information to go on a shopping spree.

Last year, Mitchell and Boneh developed SpoofGuard, which inspects Web sites users visit and hunts for clues the site may be bogus. The technology pores over URLs, graphics, and links. When there's something wrong, the software notifies the user.

All the security tools are free browser plug-ins available at Stanford's Web site.

Data-Security Bill Advances in U.S. Senate

Businesses would have to protect credit-card accounts and other sensitive consumer information and notify them when they have been exposed to identity theft, under a bill approved on Thursday by a Senate committee.

The lucrative trade in consumers' Social Security numbers would also be curtailed under a bill approved unanimously by the Senate Commerce Committee.

The vote marks the first time Congress has taken steps to improve data security following a string of breaches that have exposed some 50 million consumers to possible identity theft.

"It's important we get this moved because none of us are going to have any

privacy left if we don't," said Florida Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson.

Dozens of retailers, universities, banks, data brokers and other institutions have disclosed breaches this year, ranging from attacks by malicious hackers to losses of backup tapes during transit to storage facilities.

The announcements were prompted by a California state law that requires institutions to make such data breaches public. Seventeen states have since passed similar laws, prompting banks and other businesses to ask Congress to set a single national standard.

Under the Commerce Committee's bill, businesses and other institutions would have to notify consumers within 45 days if they are exposed to identity theft from any security breach. They would also have to notify the Federal Trade Commission, and the FTC would publicize those that affect more than 1,000 consumers.

Consumers could also prevent credit bureaus from giving out their credit reports to deter identity thieves from getting more information.

Businesses and other institutions would not be allowed to sell consumers' Social Security numbers without permission. They also would not be allowed to collect Social Security numbers from consumers, or display them publicly.

Social Security numbers, used to track government retirement benefits, are now commonly used as a numerical identifier on everything from bank accounts to drivers' licenses, a practice that experts say makes identity theft easier.

Other committees are considering data-security bills as well.

In the Senate, leaders of the Judiciary Committee have a bill that would establish jail time for business leaders who don't tell consumers when they may be at risk of identity theft. The committee likely won't act on that bill until after the month-long break that begins on Friday.

Committee Chairman Ted Stevens, an Alaska Republican, said the committee would also have to harmonize its bill with one being developed by the Senate Banking Committee.

In the House of Representatives, the Financial Services Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee are developing data-security bills.

Teens Using Internet in Record Numbers

A new survey says that the Internet has all but saturated the youth market.

The report compiled for the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that nearly nine out of 10 young people, ages 12 through 17, have online access - up from about three-quarters of young people in 2000.

By comparison, about 66 percent of American adults now use the Internet.

David Pulliam, a 17-year-old high school senior from Indianapolis, is a typical example of a wired teen.

He first got access to the Internet when he was 13, as did most of those who were surveyed. He has a blog and loves to use instant messaging to stay in touch with friends he's met at camps and sporting events. He also gets his news online, as do about three-quarters of teen Internet users who were surveyed. That's an increase of about 38 percent, compared with 2000 results.

"It's hard to imagine my life without it," Pulliam says of the Net. "In some ways, life would become a little easier because it would slow down. But it would become a lot more boring and hard because you would always be waiting for letters and responses."

At the same time, he says he and his friends also have honed their Internet use - seeing it more as a tool for communication or research than "a novelty."

Amanda Lenhart, a Pew researcher, says that rings true with the findings of the survey. "Teens are very selective - they're smart about their technology use," she says. "They use it for the kinds of things they need to do."

As one teen in a focus group told her: "If you're asking for your parents to extend your curfew, you don't send an e-mail."

The survey, completed in late 2004, included responses from 1,100 young people who were contacted randomly by phone. It has a margin of error of four percentage points. Its findings included the following:

Of those surveyed, 87 percent said they use the Internet. About half of the young people who have online access say they go on the Internet every day, up from 42 percent in 2000.

Three-quarters of wired teens use instant message, compared with 42 percent of online adults who do so. Teens most often reserve IMing for friends and e-mail for adults, including parents and teachers.

About half of families with teens who have an Internet connection have speedier broadband access, while the other half still use phone lines to connect.

Nearly a third of teens who use IM have used it to send a music or video file.

While 45 percent of those surveyed have cell phones, those phones aren't necessarily the preferred mode of communication. Given a choice, about half of online teens still use land lines to call friends, while about a quarter prefer IMing and 12 percent say they'd rather call a friend on a cell phone.

Older teen girls who were surveyed, ages 15 to 17, are among the most intense users of the Internet and cell phones, including text messaging.

"It debunks the myth of the tech-savvy boy," Lenhart says. As young people get Internet access at younger ages, that trend may only continue.

Back in Indianapolis, for instance, Pulliam's 13-year-old sister, Anna, says she first set up an e-mail account at age 8 - and started using it regularly at age 10. She's been IMing since she was 11 - and already has a blog. She also uploads photos from her digital camera to a Web site to

share with friends.

She does not have a cell phone yet - though she notes that many people her age do.

That leads technology trackers to predict that text messaging, done by about a third of those surveyed who have cell phones, will grow in popularity.

"The more other kids are doing it, the more kids want to do it," says Susannah Stern, an assistant professor of communications studies at the University of San Diego.

Still, as wired as many young people are, she says the fact that about 3 million of them remain without Internet access is cause for concern. Many of them are low-income and a disproportionate number are black, the survey found.

"When so many teenagers have such access, the few that don't are at a significant disadvantage," Stern says.

Daniel Bassill, who heads an organization that helps build the computer skills of low-income youth in Chicago, says it's an even greater challenge to find people to teach teens how to use the Internet.

"Even the kids that have access don't necessarily have people mentoring them to use the information to their greatest advantage," says Bassill, president of Cabrini Connections and the Tutor/Mentor Connection.

E-mail Is For Older People, Teens Say In Survey

E-mail is for grown-ups and U.S. teenagers now prefer instant messaging to communicate with each other online, according to a survey released on Wednesday.

Internet users from 12 to 17 years old say e-mail is best for talking to parents or institutions, but they are more likely to fire up IM when talking with each other, the nonprofit Pew Internet and American Life Project found.

E-mail is still used by 90 percent of online teens. But the survey found greater enthusiasm for instant messaging.

Three-quarters of teen Internet users use instant messaging, compared with 42 percent of adults, Pew said. Nearly half of teens said they exchanged IMs daily, and some said they spent more than two hours each day using instant-messenger programs.

Half or nearly half of the 1,100 teenagers surveyed said they used IM to send Web links or photos to each other, while nearly one-third said they had sent music or video clips over IM. Adults were much less likely to do any of those things, the survey found.

Nearly nine out of 10 teenagers say they use the Internet, up from 74 percent in 2000. Those who are still not online are likely to be so poor that they have limited access to technology, the survey found, and are disproportionately black.

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